

What I need you to understand about what is happening to trans people in the UK

This is not “a debate about toilets”.

It is the state building a system that makes trans life impossible.

Not “a bit harder”. Not “slightly more awkward”. Impossible.

The core point

Trans people cannot simply stop being trans to make the system more comfortable.

A transitioned person cannot unmake themselves. So when the state makes it impossible to live openly, safely, continuously and normally as trans, it is not offering a compromise. It is demanding disappearance.

“Public life” is not optional. Work, school, healthcare, toilets, hospitals, police, transport, shops, clubs, housing, documents, services and social existence are how human beings stay alive. If you are excluded from those things, you are not being inconvenienced. You are being made unliveable.

What this looks like in practice

- **They are not just insulting trans people. They are criminalising us.**

Trans people now have to treat intimacy itself as a legal danger zone: if someone later says they would not have consented had they known you were trans, your privacy can be reframed as sexual deception.

Receipt: The CPS says “failing to disclose birth sex” can affect consent and says a suspect may deceive someone if they “choose not to disclose their sex or trans identity”. Ciara Watkin, a 21-year-old trans woman, was convicted after failing to disclose her transgender status. [CPS guidance](#) [Ciara Watkin case](#)

- **They are making toilets impossible by design.**

Trans people are being pushed out of single-sex toilets, while the state is also changing building rules so new non-domestic buildings are designed around separate male/female toilets by default. So when people say “just use a neutral toilet”, the answer is: the same state is making sure there often will not be one.

Receipt: The government announced new rules to “halt the march of gender-neutral toilets” and require single-sex toilet facilities in new non-domestic buildings. Government media material also described a law requiring every new non-residential building to have single-sex toilets, plus a fully enclosed universal toilet only “if space allows”. [GOV.UK](#)

- **“Use a third toilet” is not inclusion. It is forced outing.**

If a venue sends a trans person to an accessible toilet, staff toilet, special toilet, or separate facility, that is not neutral. It publicly marks that person as the problem being managed.

- **Leaving the house becomes risk assessment.**

A drink, a train journey, a hospital appointment, a work event, a club, a gym, a school visit or a night out becomes: will there be a safe toilet, will someone challenge me, will staff back me up, will I be filmed, will I be forced somewhere dangerous, will I have no usable option at all?

- **Schools are being told to segregate trans children.**

Children who may already be living happily and normally at school are being dragged into toilet bans, changing-room bans, forced outing, pronoun battles and adult political surveillance.

Receipt: Draft KCSIE safeguarding guidance says schools must not permit children over 8 to use toilets designated for the “opposite biological sex”, or children over 11 to use changing rooms designated for the “opposite biological sex”. [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/KCSIE_Safeguarding_Guidance.pdf)

- **Hospitals become unsafe when people are most vulnerable.**

Imagine being ill, frightened, undressed, sedated, elderly, disabled, traumatised or dependent on care, and the system decides the priority is not your dignity or treatment, but what sex it claims you “really” are and where it can put you.

Receipt: The BMA warned that the EHRC Code could have “potentially devastating repercussions” for trans patients’ access to healthcare, trans healthcare staff, and the NHS’s ability to protect trans patients’ and staff’s dignity and rights. [BMA](https://www.bma.org.uk/news/2020/04/2020-04-20-bma-warns-ehrc-code-could-have-potentially-devastating-repercussions-for-trans-patients-access-to-healthcare-trans-healthcare-staff-and-the-nhs-s-ability-to-protect-trans-patients-and-staff-s-dignity-and-rights)

- **Police custody becomes a bodily threat.**

If the state detains you, it can classify you by “biological sex” and use that classification to decide who searches your body. For a trans person, that is not paperwork. That is coercive bodily vulnerability.

Receipt: NPCC guidance says searches exposing intimate body parts should normally be carried out according to “biological sex”; any exception requires written consent from the detainee, the officer carrying out the search and the authorising officer. The guidance was circulated to every police force in the country. [NPCC](https://www.npcc.police.uk/~/media/Files/Policy%20and%20Guidance/2020/04/2020-04-20-npcc-guidance-searches-exposing-intimate-body-parts)

- **The law now invites strangers to police us.**

The message to the public is increasingly: if you think someone looks wrong, complain. That means every pub, toilet, hospital, changing room, venue and waiting room becomes a possible checkpoint.

Receipt: Reuters reported that the EHRC Code sets out when service providers can lawfully exclude transgender people from single-sex facilities such as toilets, hospital wards or refuges if considered proportionate for privacy, dignity or safety. [Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/article/ehrc-code/ehrc-code-sets-out-when-service-providers-can-lawfully-exclude-transgender-people-from-single-sex-facilities-such-as-toilets-hospital-wards-or-refuges-if-considered-proportionate-for-privacy-dignity-or-safety-idUSKBN25G0001)

- **The speech environment is blatantly asymmetric.**

Anti-trans public figures can tell people to report and confront trans women in female-only spaces and be treated as free-speech martyrs. Trans people expressing rage, fear or grief are treated as the threat.

Receipt: Graham Linehan received £25,000 and an apology from the Met after his arrest over gender-critical posts. Reporting says one post encouraged reporting and confronting trans women in female-only spaces, with violence-language later characterised by him as a bad joke. [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/apr/20/graham-linehan-arrested-over-gender-critical-posts)

- **Employment becomes structurally unsafe.**

An openly trans person is no longer just a worker. They become, in the eyes of risk-averse employers, a facilities problem, a grievance risk, a “single-sex spaces” issue, a complaints risk, a customer-facing risk, a HR risk. That makes getting or changing jobs far harder in practice, even if discrimination is still technically unlawful.

Receipt: Employment-law analysis is already warning employers about uncertainty and legal risk around workplace toilets, changing rooms, single-sex facilities, health and safety duties and discrimination claims after the Supreme Court/EHRC position. [Pinsent Masons](https://www.pinsentmasons.com/expert-analysis-views/employment-law-analysis-warning-employers-about-uncertainty-and-legal-risk-around-workplace-toilets-changing-rooms-single-sex-facilities-health-and-safety-duties-and-discrimination-claims)

- **For an openly trans person, changing jobs in the UK now feels terrifying.**

A prospective employer may not say “we don’t want the legal risk of employing you”. But the risk calculation is obvious: toilets, colleagues, clients, complaints, HR policies, workplace facilities, media panic, reputational fear. The law may still say trans people are protected, but the system is creating every incentive to avoid us.

- **They are making trans existence administratively impossible.**

It is not one dramatic law with a big obvious title. It is the accumulation: toilets, schools, hospitals, police, clubs, public services, sport, workplaces, guidance documents, risk assessments, safeguarding rules and institutional fear.

- **This is how eradication works in a bureaucracy.**

You make it impossible to use services, impossible to be safe in public, impossible to have privacy, impossible to be intimate, impossible to be a child at school, impossible to trust hospitals, impossible to trust police, impossible to live without constant exposure.

The state is moving as a system

This is not one rogue minister, one bad judgment, one regulator, one police force, one school policy, or one NHS decision. The whole apparatus is moving in the same direction.

- **The courts created the legal opening.**

The Supreme Court ruling gave the state a new basis for treating trans women as legally male and trans men as legally female for Equality Act purposes, even where someone has a Gender Recognition Certificate.

Receipt: The EHRC summarises the ruling as meaning that, for Equality Act purposes, sex means “biological” sex only, and that obtaining a GRC does not change legal sex for Equality Act purposes. [EHRC](#)

- **The government then used that opening.**

The EHRC Code covers services, public functions and associations, and it comes into force on 5 August 2026. That means this is not just online rhetoric. It is becoming the operating manual for ordinary institutions.

Receipt: GOV.UK says the 2026 Code will come into effect on 5 August 2026 and will replace the previous 2011 Code. [GOV.UK](#)

- **Ministers control the equality watchdog’s leadership.**

The EHRC is supposed to protect equality and human rights for everyone, including people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. But its leadership is appointed through the state.

Receipt: The government announced Dr Mary-Ann Stephenson as its preferred candidate for EHRC Chair; parliamentary committees later said they could not endorse her appointment at that time, citing concerns about vision, leadership, breadth of expertise and rebuilding trust. [GOV.UK](#) [Parliamentary committees](#)

- **The EHRC has become central to narrowing trans people’s lives.**

A body that should be protecting all protected groups is now centrally associated with guidance that tells services, public bodies and associations how trans people may be excluded, segregated or challenged.

Receipt: The 2026 Code applies across services, public functions and associations, and follows the Supreme Court’s biological-sex interpretation across those settings. [EHRC](#) [GOV.UK](#)

- **The police are not neutral in this climate.**

Police guidance, political comments about culture wars, and selective urgency all help define who is treated as a threat and who is treated as merely expressing an opinion.

Receipt: NPCC search guidance has been circulated nationally and tells forces that intimate searches should normally follow “biological sex”. [NPCC](#)

- **The NHS is moving in the same direction.**

Trans healthcare is being reviewed, restricted and destabilised at the same time as hospitals are being pushed toward sex-segregation rules that make trans patients unsafe.

Receipt: NHS England is reviewing adult gender dysphoria services; the BMA has warned about the EHRC Code's potentially devastating consequences for trans patients and healthcare staff. [NHS England](#) [BMA](#)

- **Employers are being pushed into risk-management mode.**

Even if an employer wants to be decent, the legal and regulatory environment tells them that a trans employee is now a facilities problem, complaints risk and legal uncertainty.

Receipt: Employment-law analysis describes employers as facing uncertainty around single-sex facilities, health and safety duties, discrimination risk and the practical problem of avoiding leaving trans staff with no usable facilities. [Pinsent Masons](#)

- **This is what institutional alignment looks like.**

Courts redefine sex. Ministers appoint the regulator. The regulator writes exclusionary guidance. Schools implement it. Police operationalise it. The NHS absorbs it. Employers risk-manage it. Venues enforce it. Ordinary people are invited to challenge us.

- **It does not need a single secret meeting to be coordinated.**

The coordination is visible in the outcome: every branch of public life is being pushed toward the same conclusion - that trans people are a problem to be managed, separated, deterred, exposed, punished or removed.

- **That is why this feels like the whole state turning at once.**

Because from the point of view of a trans person trying to live an ordinary life, that is the practical effect.

Digital ID could turn this into permanent, machine-readable outing

This is not just about toilets or services in the physical world. The government is also building digital identity infrastructure at the same time as it is redefining trans people out of legal recognition.

- **Digital ID could become a new way to force trans people to out themselves.**

If a digital ID includes "biological sex", "birth sex", or any sex marker that overrides a person's lived and documented identity, then every interaction using that ID becomes a possible forced disclosure: work checks, renting, public services, banking, travel, age verification, online access, or anything else the system is later expanded to cover.

- **This could invalidate existing ID in practice.**

Many trans people already have passports, driving licences, bank records, NHS records and workplace documents that reflect who they are. A new state-backed digital ID with a contradictory sex marker could create a permanent mismatch, outing people repeatedly and making ordinary verification unsafe.

- **The government has explicitly considered sex/gender data in digital ID design.**

This is not a paranoid guess. The digital identity consultation discussed "sex or gender information" and distinguished between biological sex, legal or certified sex, and gender.

Receipt: GOV.UK's digital identity consultation says sex/gender data can mean biological sex, legal or certified sex, or gender; it also states that "in almost all cases", legal or certified sex reflects biological sex. [GOV.UK consultation](#)

- **The government has put the founder of Mumsnet on the Digital ID Advisory Group.**

For many trans people, Mumsnet is not a neutral "digital community" in this context. It is one of the places where UK anti-trans politics has been normalised and organised for years. Putting its founder in the room for digital ID is not reassuring.

Receipt: GOV.UK says Justine Roberts CBE, founder and Executive Chair of Mumsnet and Gransnet, has been appointed to the Digital ID Advisory Group as a “leading voice in digital communities”. [GOV.UK](#)

- **This is exactly the kind of infrastructure that can make exclusion automatic.**

Once a state identity system encodes the wrong sex marker, discrimination no longer needs a person at a desk making a hostile decision. The system can simply reject, flag, mismatch, disclose or route people incorrectly by default.

- **The danger is not only what digital ID does on day one.**

Digital identity systems tend to expand. Even if the first version is limited, the risk is that it becomes the proof layer for more and more interactions. If anti-trans definitions are baked in early, they can follow trans people everywhere.

- **This connects directly to the wider state assault.**

Courts redefine sex. The EHRC operationalises exclusion. Schools, police, hospitals and employers absorb it. Then digital ID risks turning the same hostile definition into infrastructure: portable, reusable, machine-readable and hard to escape.

- **For trans people, this is a nightmare scenario.**

The state could create an ID system that makes every interaction a forced choice between outing yourself, being challenged, or being treated as fraudulent because your documents and lived identity no longer align.

The point is simple: if “biological sex” is built into digital ID, the state is not just excluding trans people from places. It is building a system that can expose us everywhere.

The security-state direction makes this even more frightening

When minority rights are framed as foreign interference, extremism, social destabilisation or ideological capture, that creates a path for surveillance and policing tools to be turned on people defending their own existence.

Receipt: The government has introduced new state-threat powers allowing the Home Secretary to designate bodies engaged in state-threat activity, with new offences for supporting, assisting or obtaining material benefits from a designated body. [GOV.UK](#)

The point is not that every worst-case outcome has already happened. The point is that the logic is being built: trans equality is framed as dangerous, foreign, extremist or destabilising; the state then expands powers to act against supposedly dangerous, foreign, extremist or destabilising activity. Trans people are right to notice that trajectory.

This is serious enough that genocide-prevention and human-rights bodies have warned about it

- **A genocide-prevention institute has issued a Red Flag Alert for the UK.**

This is not internet hyperbole. A genocide-prevention body has warned that the UK is moving through a process of erasure against trans and intersex people.

Receipt: The Lemkin Institute says recent UK judicial and governmental developments attempt to harm trans and intersex people by stripping them of privacy and segregating them as “others”, and that these moves are part of a broader process of erasure. [Lemkin Institute](#)

- **The Lemkin Institute has described the EHRC Code as genocidal in nature.**

Again: not “controversial”, not “awkward”, not “a balancing exercise”. Genocidal in nature.

Receipt: The Lemkin Institute says the EHRC Code’s attempt to erase trans and intersex people from public life is “genocidal in nature”. [Lemkin Institute](#)

- **International human-rights bodies can see the danger.**

Outside the UK culture-war bubble, this is being recognised as a human-rights emergency, not a polite disagreement.

Receipt: The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights warned against measures that could exclude trans people from many areas of life and cautioned against treating human rights as a zero-sum conflict built on prejudice against trans people. [Council of Europe](#)

What I need from allies

I know most people who care about trans people are hearing about this through headlines, fragments, and vague references to “toilets” or “balancing rights”. That does not give a clear picture of what is actually happening. The reality is much wider, more serious, and more practical than most people have been led to understand.

- **Please understand that this is not just about toilets.**

Toilets matter because they are where exclusion becomes immediate and physical. But this also affects healthcare, schools, work, police, ID, public services, clubs, venues and whether trans people can move through the world safely.

- **Please realise there is more to know than the headlines suggest.**

A lot of the harm is hidden in guidance documents, statutory codes, school policies, NHS decisions, police guidance and employment risk. It does not always look dramatic from the outside, but it changes daily life.

- **Please believe the level of fear.**

If trans people sound frightened, angry or exhausted, it is because the consequences are real. People are not making escape plans, withdrawing from public life or falling apart because of a minor policy disagreement.

- **Please notice the language institutions use.**

Words like “clarity”, “safeguarding”, “guidance”, “single-sex spaces” and “balancing rights” can sound neutral. But the practical effect is often exclusion, outing, humiliation and danger.

- **Please keep yourself informed where you can.**

I do not need everyone to become an expert overnight. But even a basic grasp of what is happening makes a huge difference, because it means trans people do not have to explain the whole situation from scratch every time.

- **Please speak up in ordinary places.**

Workplaces, schools, venues, clubs, family chats, group chats, unions, political parties, local councils. This is being implemented through ordinary institutions, so ordinary pushback matters.

- **Please do not wait for one dramatic incident to prove it is serious.**

The harm is cumulative. It is the steady narrowing of where trans people can safely exist. The point of being informed is to recognise the pattern early enough to resist it.

I do not need perfection. I need the people who care about me to understand that this is serious, to know that the “toilets debate” framing is wildly inadequate, and to be willing to say so out loud.

The point

The UK is building a system where trans people cannot safely use toilets, healthcare, schools, police, services, workplaces, clubs, public spaces, identity systems or intimate relationships.

**That is not inconvenience.
That is not “balancing rights”.
That is making life impossible.**

Evidence appendix

- **EHRC Code:** The 2026 Code covers services, public functions and associations and comes into effect on 5 August 2026. [GOV.UK](#)
- **Supreme Court / legal sex:** The EHRC summarises the ruling as meaning sex under the Equality Act means biological sex, and a GRC does not change legal sex for Equality Act purposes. [EHRC](#)
- **CPS / criminalisation of non-disclosure:** CPS guidance says failure to disclose birth sex or trans identity can affect consent. [CPS](#)
- **Ciara Watkin:** CPS announced her conviction after failure to disclose transgender status. [CPS](#)
- **Toilet building rules:** Government announced rules to “halt the march of gender-neutral toilets” and require single-sex toilets in new non-domestic buildings. [GOV.UK](#)
- **Schools / KCSIE:** Draft guidance says children over 8 must not use toilets designated for the opposite biological sex, and children over 11 must not use changing rooms designated for the opposite biological sex. [GOV.UK](#)
- **Healthcare:** The BMA warned of potentially devastating repercussions for trans patients, trans staff and the NHS’s ability to protect dignity and rights. [BMA](#)
- **NHS gender services:** NHS England is reviewing adult gender dysphoria services. [NHS England](#)
- **Police searches:** NPCC guidance says intimate searches should normally follow biological sex, with limited exceptions requiring written consent from multiple parties. [NPCC](#)
- **Single-sex spaces:** Reuters reported that the Code sets out when service providers can lawfully exclude transgender people from single-sex facilities including toilets, hospital wards and refuges. [Reuters](#)
- **Linehan / policing asymmetry:** Reporting records that Graham Linehan received £25,000 compensation and an apology from the Met after arrest over gender-critical posts. [The Guardian](#)
- **Employment:** Employment-law analysis says employers face uncertainty and legal risk around single-sex workplace facilities, health and safety duties and discrimination. [Pinsent Masons](#)
- **Digital ID / sex marker risk:** The digital identity consultation discusses biological sex, legal or certified sex, and gender; the Digital ID Advisory Group includes Mumsnet founder Justine Roberts. [GOV.UK consultation](#)
[GOV.UK advisory group](#)
- **State-threat powers:** The government has created new designation powers for bodies engaged in state-threat activity, with offences for support, assistance or material benefit. [GOV.UK](#)
- **Lemkin Institute:** The Lemkin Institute issued a Red Flag Alert and later described the EHRC Code as genocidal in nature. [Red Flag Alert](#) [EHRC Code statement](#)
- **Council of Europe:** The Commissioner warned against measures excluding trans people from many areas of life and against zero-sum rights framing built on prejudice. [Council of Europe](#)